

The Budget—Mr. Stevens

at that time about the current period. The 1974 to 1980 figures, averages and those types of things, were revealed. Incidentally, in last night's overview, *The Economic Outlook for Canada*, they have carefully set the past aside. We do not have those figures. All they are doing is playing with certain projections for the future.

• (1640)

What I would point out is that in November, 1981, we were told that in 1982 employment in this country would grow 1.8 per cent. In reality, it fell 3.2 per cent. We were told that in 1983 employment would grow 1.7 per cent. In reality, if we believe the statement of the Minister of Finance last night, it is going to fall 0.6 per cent, over one half of 1 per cent.

There is something I would have loved to have been able to ask the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I see the Minister of Finance is in the Chamber. Perhaps he could ask for unanimous consent to answer my second question. It is simply this: Why were we told in November, 1981 that the labour force would grow 2.8 per cent last year when in reality it fell 0.5 per cent? Why is there that 3 point discrepancy? Did those people simply get lost? Did they all suddenly die? Did they disappear? Did they emigrate? What happened?

We know what happened. There were no jobs for them. We anticipated the labour force was going to grow 2.5 per cent. It was no surprise for the Government of the day. The fact is it failed the people of Canada. They failed those who ended up on the unemployment list or, worse still, gave up looking for a job.

Most important, why were we told in 1981 that this year the labour force would grow 2.2 per cent when last night we were told it will actually fall by 1 per cent? What happened to those people? We are talking about hundreds of thousands of Canadians who, it was anticipated in November, 1981, would be joining the labour force. Now we are being told that they have suddenly disappeared.

What I am suspicious of, having lived so long with this Government and knowing its deceptions, sophistry and lack of honesty, and what is happening is it is massaging the figures, as economists like to say. It is assuming that the labour force growth will be smaller and, of course, arithmetically that means unemployment may look better.

If you want to go on to this question of unemployment, we were told in November of 1981 that unemployment in the country in 1982 would be 7.8 per cent of the work force. In fact, it turned out to be 11.1 per cent. In 1981 we were told that this year we would see 8.3 per cent of the work force unemployed, roughly what the United States is experiencing. In fact, we find it is an astounding 12.4 per cent due to the gross incompetence of this Government.

If we believe the Minister, and I do not recommend that Canadians believe him, but if they choose to believe what the Minister said last night, the unemployment rate will be 11.4 per cent next year. In November, 1981, the Minister's predecessor told us it would only be 8.3 per cent. Who can you believe? I believe that the figures presented last night were deceptive. They are not an accurate reflection of what the

Government honestly believes. Likely, some Members of this House will rise on another day simply to ask questions such as I am asking this afternoon. One is: why can a Government with all the mandarins it has around, the thousands and thousands of calculator pushers, not get more accurate information as to where we are heading?

I could give many more examples of what appears to have been the most unbelievable, almost optimistic projections in earlier budgets that in reality have gone to ashes because, as time has demonstrated, this Government does not know what it is doing.

Let me touch on one other matter, that is, productivity. I was rather surprised to find that that is not even commented on as far as estimates of increases in productivity are concerned. The Government has just buried them. In earlier budgets at least it took a guess at what productivity would do in the sense of going up or down. This time it makes no comment.

I found something most startling in reviewing the budgetary papers yesterday. We in this country have lived with the difficulties of Crown corporations, including the \$125 million write-off with respect to Consolidated Computer Corporation. Not only have we sustained that write-off, but we have never had an explanation given to the House as to what went wrong. The internal investigation that took place has never been openly tabled or revealed in this House. Notwithstanding the growing scandalous nature of what is happening in Canadair, this House has never had a meaningful debate on Canadair.

Other than \$1 items, letters of comfort, one thing and another, we have never been consulted with regard to whether the public would like us to support that company. We now find that our exposure may reach somewhere between \$1.8 billion and \$2.3 billion. Notwithstanding all the other fundings that the Government may be anticipating in the current year and subsequent years with respect to de Havilland, CDC, Canadian National Railways, Air Canada and all these other entities, there is not one word mentioned in the budget brought in last night by the Minister of Finance as to what in fact will be the financial requirements for all of those companies.

As the Auditor General has pointed out, those companies collectively employ hundreds of thousands of people. They are virtually like a Government underneath the Government. Can you believe this? The Government that has the nerve through the Minister of Employment and Immigration to suggest that it is time to be honest with the Canadian people is the same Government that brought in a budget without giving any information concerning the estimated financial needs of hundreds and hundreds of Crown corporations that we now live with.

Since I have been in the House of Commons, I have found it interesting to see how that has evolved. I remember the good old days—it looks that way now—in the early seventies when it was taken for granted that whatever a Crown corporation had to raise was part of the financial requirements of the budget and was reflected as such in the budgetary papers. I